Background & Goals

• Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requires a State Rail Plan at minimum every 4 years to remain eligible for certain types of rail grants
  • Update of 2015 Rail Plan will include Freight/Intercity passenger rail service

• Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires a State Freight Plan every 5 years in order to obligate Freight Formula funds
  • Update of 2012 Freight Plan will cover all modes: rail, highway, air, & water
Rail Plan Elements

- **State of System**
- **Overall socio-economic background**

**Vision and Goals**
- Review vision and specific goals for the rail system

**Existing Conditions**

**Trends Analysis**
- **Overall socio-economic conditions**
- **Commodity flows**
- **Passenger ridership**

**Initiative Ideas**
- Outstanding from 2015 Rail Plan
- New initiatives

**Initiatives Prioritization**
- How do we decide which initiatives to pursue with limited funds?

*Initiatives* can be projects, but also new computer systems, signal updates, improved coordination, etc. that increase efficiency. These operational and administrative efforts are particularly important given limited funding.
Passenger Rail Trends
Passenger Rail Ridership

- Overall decline in VT Amtrak ridership since FY2013
  - Ridership has steadily risen in NY and MA over the same time.
  - NH growing ridership since a low in 2015
Passenger Rail Ridership by Station

• Essex Junction, Brattleboro, Rutland, and White River Junction = 67% of VT ridership
  • Ridership at Brattleboro, Rutland, and White River Junction are down since 2013

Top 3 city pairs by ridership and revenue
1) Rutland – NYC
2) Brattleboro – NYC
3) Essex Junction - NYC

Data for 2014-2016 omitted for space
Freight Rail Trends
Why Does Freight Rail Matter?

INDUSTRY SECTORS
- Agriculture & Mining
- Construction
- Energy
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade & Transportation
- Retail Trade & Health Care
- Government
- Knowledge (PST)

MODES
- Rail
- Heavy Truck
- Pipeline
- Water
- Less-Than-Truckload
- Light Truck
- Air

SHIPMENT CHARACTERISTICS
- Weight
- Value

VT RAIL PLAN & VT FREIGHT PLAN UPDATE 10/6/2020
Freight Rail Overview

- 4% growth in tons, 8% growth in carloads since 2011
- Data not available 2012-2015 (STB Confidential Waybill Sample)
Freight Rail By Direction

New York (inbound) & Maine (outbound) are top trading partners
Freight Rail Trading Partners

- Vermont is linked worldwide by short line railroads and then Class I rail networks.
- Tonnage inbound to Vermont increased from 14% in 2011 to 24% in 2018.

Note: Map only shows inbound and outbound rail freight movements. Another 4 million tons (58% of total) moved through Vermont by rail in 2018
Notable System Changes & Initiatives

• Central Maine & Quebec acquired by Canadian Pacific

• Work on Western Corridor rail bridges (Hoosick Junction to Rutland) – 2018 BUILD Grant

• Pending sale of Pan Am Railways

• Hoosac Tunnel Closure
  • February – early April 2020
  • Re-route possible because of resilient freight rail network
Notable System Changes & Initiatives

- Middlebury Tunnel
- Extension of *Ethan Allen Express* to Burlington - 2021
Next Steps
Passenger Rail Forecasting

• Forecast Horizon: 20 years

Background Factors
- Economic Trends
- Demographic Trends
- COVID-19 Impacts

Committed Service Improvements

Exploration of Potential Recommendations
Online Web Map

• Link: http://bit.ly/VTFreightRailMap

• Purpose:
  • Collect stakeholder input on issues and potential initiatives
  • Provide valuable information

• What would be of most interest to stakeholders?
  • Rail-related initiatives and status
  • Vertical clearance issues
  • Transload locations
  • Amtrak station ADA features
  • Freight-related employment data
  • Other?
Discussion
Discussion Questions

What is the biggest challenge you face using the passenger rail system in Vermont?

What are the biggest challenges to moving more freight by rail in Vermont?

What NON-RAIL strategies could Vermont use to help improve rail use in the State (both passenger and freight)?

* Land use/zoning changes
* Highway connections
* Transit connections
* Advertising/marketing

How do you think COVID will impact the future of rail in Vermont?
Additional Information
Additional Information

• For more information on the rail and freight plans including
  • Newsletters
  • Data Trends Summary
  • Draft Existing Conditions Technical Memo
  • Online map with information and stakeholder feedback tool
  • Recording of full presentation and slides

• Rail Plan: https://vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports
• Freight Plan: https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight
Thank You

For more information on the Vermont Rail Plan Update, visit vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports or contact Zoe Neaderland at Zoe.Neaderland@vermont.gov or (802) 793-2778.

For more information on the Vermont Freight Plan Update, visit vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight or contact Dave Pelletier at Dave.Pelletier@vermont.gov or (802) 595-9675.